



Town of Hebron

15 Gilead Street
Hebron, CT 06248
Tel (860) 228-5971
FAX (860) 228-5980
www.Hebronct.com

- PLANNING/ZONING
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Testimony of Joseph J. Summers

Public Safety and Security Committee Public Hearing

February 29, 2016

Chairman Dargan, Chairman Larson, Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, for the record my name Joseph Summers from Hebron and I am here to testify in opposition of:

HB-5278 – AN ACT CONCERNING AUTOMATIC FIRE EXTINGUISHING SYSTEMS IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS DESIGNED TO BE OCCUPIED BY TWO FAMILIES.

I would like to thank the committee allowing me to submit testimony here today.

The current language is very ambiguous since the interpretation of what constitutes a two-family dwelling is interpretive, see interpretation I-26-08 attached.

Many municipalities allow what is commonly referred to as "in-law" apartments or "accessory" apartments through local zoning regulations. The intent of these zoning regulations is many to allow elderly or disabled family members to live independently, but have family members very close by to lend assistance if needed.

Would an addition to a single family dwelling for a separate dwelling unit require the entire structure to have sprinklers?

This should be addressed through the regulation process and Codes and Standards.

The current state building code requires a fire separation between the dwelling units of not less than 1-hour fire-resistance rating with the exception for the installation of an automatic fire sprinkler system in accordance with NFPA 13, then the fire-resistance rating can be reduced to ½-hour.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph J. Summers

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Building Official / Zoning Enforcement Officer

jsummers@hebronct.com

STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. I-26-08

May 20, 2009

The following is being offered in response to your letter in which you seek a formal interpretation. The question would apply to Section R317.1, of the 2003 International Residential Code portion of the 2005 State Building Code. Your specific area of concern is the code application between in-law apartment and two-family dwellings.

Question 1:

"Is an "in-law apartment" a two-family dwelling? The living area meets the definition of a dwelling unit, except they have a common door between each dwelling unit. An example; common door between the kitchen areas or living areas."

Answer 1:

The term "In-Law Apartment" is not defined in the State Building Code. The code does not prohibit multiple bathrooms, kitchens, living or sleeping rooms in a single family dwelling. A single family dwelling with multiple of these rooms would require a building layout which would demonstrate an interconnection between all rooms in the dwelling unit. For example, if one must exit the single family dwelling and travel out of doors to re-enter the apartment, such building layout would not be a single family dwelling but a two family dwelling. The code defines "dwelling" which states in part: *Any building that contains one or two dwelling units.* "Dwelling Unit" is defined as: *A single unit providing complete independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.* The permit applicant needs to define, based on the building code definitions, the buildings intended use and whether the building contains one or two dwelling units. Once this information is provided, the building official can review what is submitted for code compliance.

Question 2:

"Another scenario would be a basement being converted to an "in-law apartment" and the access between the primary residence and the apartment is the basement stairs."

Answer 2:

Please refer to Question 1 answer above.

Question 3:

"If the answer to Q1 is no, then would the answer be changed if the common area was an accessory structure? An example would be if configured as primary residence/garage/apartment or primary residence/sunroom apartment. In other words the garage or sunroom are common between the dwelling units."

Answer 3:

Please refer to Question 1 answer above.

